

'70 December 14

CHEMICAL WORLD-INDEX KEY

3103 RIVER ROAD,

READING, PA., 19605

LIST

NEWS

Dear Friends:

A YEAR TO REMEMBER

This is the 20th Anniversary year of the line-formula chemical notation that users throughout the chemical world now identify as the "WLN" key to chemical information management. Perhaps that alone is sufficient justification for this special personal memo of messages, some intensely happy and one that is intensely tragic, over the "same place, same station," but with volunteered funds for the mail costs.

This is a year to remember as the year the notation finally got its hearing in a "court" of examiners who are most concerned with the costs and consequences in chemical information management. The surprise reprinting (for perhaps the 5th time) of that 1950 parable on "The Empty Column" led to a most generous invitation to tell the story behind that parable, in the same journal of COMPUTERS AND AUTOMATION, to the computer world. That report in turn led to new opportunities like one just last week, to see a demonstration of "do-it-yourself" searching of your own tapes, with NO PROGRAMMING. In that demonstration, I saw how easily I could have put a tape of 250,000 card images (that many IBM cards!) onto the S&RS/GE tape drive, sit down at the typewriting console to pick-peck my string-searching questions, and see the hits on an electrostatic printer alongside just 3.2 minutes later! No format, no program! You are urged to write to Search & Retrieval Systems Co., 145 Church St., Vienna, Va. 22180 for a brief brochure-description on this brand new breakthrough (938-0688).

April 9th was a very special day to remember, when my family and Detrick associates heightened the honors of receiving the US Army Award for Exceptional Civilian Service, the highest award a civilian can receive from the Army. The next day we became grandparents! Beautifully blue-eyed Tara Ileen attended her first lecture at Albright College a month later, when a ruse to "give a progress report on WLN" led to a complete surprise in the brand new "Reading Chemist of the Year" Award.

* An active group of chemical information managers last week added another honor
* by asking me to help compile a Directory of FEDERAL CHEMICAL INFORMATION CENTERS,
* and CONSULTANTS who might volunteer free help-- because the group knew that I now manage the mailing list for CWIK LIST newsletters. The 3-star signal on the margin suggests that I'd like to give potential consultants one star if they volunteer, another if they have published, and a third if they do indeed give help. Reader's nominations for consultants and volunteers are hereby requested!

Dr. William Stahl and his research staff at the McCormick foods research center added another compiling honor that same day last week, in generously helping us to start a "Common Data Base" with the 1000-some chemicals that are in the GRAS list (Generally Regarded As Safe). Our standardized card layout will give the structure description (WLN), COMMONLY USED NAME (here to be determined by the using majority), molecular formula, and Flavor identification number, all on one card for most items. Card copies or lists will be furnished free to all cooperating Federal food groups.

The tragic news was relayed to me by phone while I was at this food conference: that a \$15,000,000 appropriation to keep the \$200,000,000 Detrick facilities and 300 scientists for Environmental Health was rejected in a House-Senate Conference. No details are known at this writing, but I want to take this opportunity to pay tribute to the unpublicized and generally unrecognized Detrick scientific community that will be fragmented and lost forever if new appraisals are not made very soon.

Wm. J. Wiswesser